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### LWV Bulletin, November, 1994

League of Women Voters of the Huntington Area

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November, 1994

# HUNTINGTON AREA LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

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Huntington, WV 25705  
736-4920

Ann Logan Speer, Treasurer  
706 Ridgewood Road  
Huntington, WV 25701  
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## November meeting with Mayor Dean at MU

The November League meeting will be cosponsored with the Yeager Scholars. The program will be a talk by and a question/answer session with Mayor Jean Dean. It will be held at 5 p.m. at Marshall University's Student Center, Room 2E12. Those who wish may stay afterwards to eat together. Metered parking is available beside the Student Center and behind the Placement Center. (The Placement Center is located at 5th Ave. and 17th St.) There will also be off street parking available at that time of day.

Ideas which Mayor Dean will discuss are 1) the need for citizens to be active in local government and 2) a comparison of the Strong Mayor form of government to the Council Manager form. Citizen input into the operations and policies of local government is essential. The responsibility for how well Huntington develops in the next few years and into the 21st century rests with ordinary citizens as well as elected officials. We urge members and friends to attend this meeting.

## LWV Finance Drive needs your support

The League thanks those who have already contributed to our annual finance drive. Members who do not have time to actively participate may find this an opportunity to lend additional support to the League with a financial contribution. Only a small portion - \$2- of each membership is allocated to our local group, with the remainder funding LWV activities and services at state and national levels. Without a successful finance drive we would be forced to increase our annual dues in order to operate our local League. Contributions may be mailed to the League of Women Voters of the Huntington Area, 706 Ridgewood Road, Huntington, WV 25701.

## Membership update

The LWV Huntington Area has set a goal of having each member recruit a new member this year.

## Recycling Returns

Curbside recycling is coming to Huntington again. BFI is offering this service to customers at \$3/month, to begin in November, on Fridays. If you wish to subscribe to the service, contact BFI, 2546 Guyan Avenue, Huntington, WV 25701, 525-1631. BFI will provide the bins.

Items to be set out for recycling will include glass (remove lids and rings), newspapers (not in plastic bags; do not put out on rainy or snowy days); aluminum and tin beverage and food cans. Rinse food and beverage containers and crush plastic and metal containers, if possible. Bins should be put out only when full and by 6 a.m. on collection day.

## VOTE for Amendment 3

The LWV of WV supports Amendment 3 because it provides for bonds to finance new and improvements of sewer and water systems in WV. 445,000 West Virginians are not served by public water systems. More than 100 existing public water systems have been under a "Boil Water" advisory during 1994. 720,000 of our citizens are not on public sewer systems and 60% of our existing sewer systems must modernize to comply with environmental standards. Amendment 3 is a people, environmental, and economic issue. When industries want to locate or upgrade in WV, they need an adequate infrastructure already in place. Otherwise they will go to a state that can provide water and sewer services and other facilities. The League does not have positions on the other ballot issues.

## Voter Service

LWV of the Huntington Area will again offer an Election Day Call-In Service. It will be on November 8 from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Information can be obtained on voting locations, WV Constitutional Amendments and excess levies by calling 525-7661.

The Call-In service is sponsored by WOWK-TV.

# Candidates respond

On behalf of the LWV of the Huntington Area, member Frances Huddleston has received the questionnaires submitted to the candidates. The Herald Dispatch will publish these answers in a Sunday edition before the election. We thank the Herald-Dispatch for its cooperation.

## Educational Activities

League members spoke to Our Lady of Fatima's Women's Guild on how the League operates and the ballot issues.

An Environmental Shopping program was given to the First State Bank of Barboursville's Harvest Club.

## Thank You . . .

Thank you to League members and friends who helped make the candidates meeting a success -- Rebecca Bookwalter, Moderator; Bob Csernica, Timekeeper; and Betty Colker, Karla Murphy, and Mary Robson, for gathering the question cards from the audience. The Woman's Club of Huntington cosponsored the meeting and provided excellent facilities and refreshments.

## Leaf composting done by city

The City of Huntington will compost leaves again this fall. Leaves must be placed in paper yard waste bags (found at local stores). Leaves in plastic bags will not be composted. You can save the amount of trash being hauled to Kentucky by participating in the leaf composting program or by composting your own waste. The WVU Extension Service, Cabell County Courthouse has a brochure on household composting.

## Calendar

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|---------|--|
| Nov. 2  | 7 p.m. Division of Environmental protection town meeting, MU Student Center.                 |
| Nov. 3  | 8 p.m. Third Congressional District candidates' debate, WPBY-TV, sponsored by the LWV of WV. |
| Nov. 16 | 5 p.m. League meeting with Mayor Jean Dean.  |
| Nov. 28 | 11:30 a.m. LWV Board Meeting.  |
| Dec. 5  | 7 p.m. Legislators Meeting @ home of Ann Speer.  |

## LWV State Board does not support gender balance law

The State Board of the LWV of WV decided not to support a law aimed at gender balance on state boards and commissions. The law wanted to either require a certain percentage of women to be appointed to boards and commissions or establish term limits.

The Board said that such a law could prevent qualified women or men from serving. LWV of WV will continue to nominate people and put pressure on the Governor and the Legislature to appoint qualified people, regardless of gender or political influence. The report on the status of women gives us new ammunition, since 52% of the population is female; more women are in high education than men; jobs for women have grown faster than for men, etc.

If anyone would like to volunteer to serve on a state board or commission, submit a brief bio to the LWV State Board.

The LWV is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Membership in the League is open to women and men of voting age. Annual dues, not tax deductible, are \$30 individual, \$45 for two in one household.

To join, send your check to: Ann Speer, Treasurer, 706 Ridgewood Road, Huntington, WV 25701.

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# LWV Bulletin

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# INFORMATION ON EXCESS LEVIES AND CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

NOVEMBER 8, 1994

## COUNTY AND HUNTINGTON EXCESS LEVIES

Prepared by the League of Women Voters of the Huntington Area

### Voters in Huntington - Paving and Rebuilding Streets

Voters in the City of Huntington may vote on a 3-year excess levy for the purpose of paving and rebuilding streets. The extra property taxes would start in the 1995-96 year. The amount of the levy on each \$100 assessed valuation would be Class I - 1.5 cents; Class II - 3 cents; and Class IV - 6 cents. The cost per year for a home appraised at \$50,000 would be \$9. The amount generated each year would be approximately \$450,000.

### Voters in Cabell County - Economic Development

Voters in Cabell County, including the municipalities, may vote on a 3-year excess levy for the purpose of economic development. The extra property taxes would start in the 1995-96 year. The amount of the levy on each \$100 assessed valuation would not exceed for Class I - 1 cent; Class II - 2 cents; Class III and IV - 4 cents. The cost per year for a home appraised at \$50,000 would be \$6. The amount generated per year would be approximately \$500,000.

### Definitions - Excess Levies on the Property Tax

Assessments are at 60% of the appraised values. As with other property taxes, homeowners who are eligible for the Homestead Exemption will not pay a tax on the first \$20,000 assessed value of their home. Class I property includes agricultural and intangible personal property; Class II includes residential property; Class III includes vehicles, boats, and utility and business property outside municipalities; Class IV includes vehicles, boats, and utility and business property within municipalities. It takes a 60% vote to pass municipal or county excess levies.

## PROPOSED STATE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

Prepared by the League of Women Voters of West Virginia

### Amendment No. 1 - Constitutional Amendment to Repeal Archaic Language

"To amend the State Constitution to repeal and delete the section prohibiting mixed schools; removing language referring to paupers and male voters, and reducing the residency requirements for voting to thirty days."

The amendment would delete Section 8 of Article 12, which reads, "White and colored persons shall not be taught in the same school." Although this section has been nullified by a 1954 decision of the United States Supreme Court, it has never been removed from the WV Constitution.

The amendment would also change Section 1 of Article 4 which relates to requirements for voting. It would remove the requirement that citizens must be male and not be paupers in order to qualify to vote and would change the residency requirement from one year to 30 days. These provisions have been nullified by the U.S. Constitution and current WV residency requirements.

Although the archaic language is not in effect because of the supremacy of federal constitutional rights, proponents of the amendment believe that it should be removed from the State Constitution.

### **Amendment No. 2 - Removing the Sheriff's Term Limit Amendment**

"To repeal Section 3, Article 9 of the State Constitution which provided that a person who has been elected or who has served as sheriff during all or any part of two consecutive terms shall be ineligible for the office of sheriff during any part of the term immediately following the second of the two consecutive terms."

The State Sheriff's Association points out that only the offices of sheriff and governor are subject to term limits in West Virginia. Further, West Virginia is one of only three states which limits sheriff terms. They argue that limiting terms denies citizens the right to vote for any candidate they choose.

The rationale for limiting sheriff terms is derived from the historical potential for money and power associated with the office. As chief tax collector, the county sheriff formerly received a commission for all taxes collected. Current law allows a commission only after 85% of the taxes have been collected. The commissions are in addition to the sheriff's base salary which is lower than that of other county officials. The role of chief law enforcement official could also give the sheriff the opportunity to build a power base as well as enrich himself. The sheriff directs a staff of deputies, collects fines, and confiscates goods in criminal cases.

This same amendment was defeated in 1982 and 1986.

### **Amendment No. 3 - Infrastructure Improvement Amendment**

"To allow the issuing and selling of not more than three hundred million dollars in general obligation bonds of the state, the proceeds of which will be used (1) to finance the construction and improvement of water systems and (2) to finance sewage systems and the acquisition and improvement of economic development sites in the state; to dedicate as the initial source of repayment of the principal of and interest on the bonds, a portion of the existing gross receipts tax on the activity of severing, extracting or producing natural resources, and providing for the levy of additional taxes sufficient to pay such bonds to the extent that the amounts dedicated as aforesaid are insufficient therefor."

State Division of Environmental Protection officials estimate water and sewage needs in West Virginia at nearly \$3 billion. They believe that the \$300 million would be a good start toward meeting those needs. Local areas could apply to the WV Infrastructure and Jobs Development Council for grants. The Council would develop guidelines for evaluating funding requests and providing grants when no other financial arrangement is workable. Proponents of the amendment believe that infrastructure is the purest form of economic development and that the program will improve the environment and help WV become more competitive with other states.

State voters have traditionally resisted committing the state to increased indebtedness. Even though the amendment provides for the repayment of the bonds through severance taxes, it does stipulate that additional taxes might be necessary if revenues are not sufficient.

The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan organization whose purpose is to promote political responsibility among citizens through informed and active participation in government. Membership in the League is open to men and women of voting age. Dues are not tax deductible. For more information about the League, contact 522-3361.